CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a user, comprising:

(A) a client computer system, wherein said client computer system is a digital computer;

(B) a local area network connected to said client computer system;

(C) a server computer connected to said local area network to provide a means of communicating between said local area network and one or more external communication channels;

(D) a satellite communication channel connected to said server computer by a radio frequency link; and

(E) an information provider connected to one or more external communication channels for the purpose of providing information to one or more said client computer systems.

2. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a personal computer.

3. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a Macintosh computer.

4. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a computer workstation.

5. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user

as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a mini computer.

6. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a mainframe computer.

7. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system is a special purpose digital computer.

8. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Windows operating system.

9. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Windows 95 operating system.

10. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Windows NT operating system.

11. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Macintosh operating system.

12. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Unix operating system.

13. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has a Linux operating system.

14. A communication system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said client computer system has an OS/2 operating system.

15. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said local area network is a IPX network.

16. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said local area network is a IP network.

17. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said information provider is an internet service provider.

18. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, wherein said information provider is a software distributor.

19. A communications system for communicating between an information provider and a user, as recited in claim 1, further comprising: a modem electrically connected to said server computer to transmit data electronically to a telephone land line.

20. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, comprising:

(A) receiving data from said information service provider by a satellite communications channel; and

(B) conveying said received data across a local area network to one or more digital computer systems.

21. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising:

(C) generating a request from said one or more digital computer systems to said information service provider.

22. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising:

(D) conveying said generated request to said information service provide by a land line communication channel.

23. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising:

(D) conveying said generated request to said information service provide by a satellite communication channel.

24. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising:

(D) conveying said generated request to said information service provide by a wireless communication channel.

25. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising:

(D) conveying said generated request to said information service provide by a routed communication channel.

26. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider an a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising: receiving data from said satellite communications channel into computer hardware memory.

27. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider an

a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising: checking to determine if said received data has an IP format.

28. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 20, further comprising: checking to determine if said received data has a packetized format.

29. A process for asymmetrically communicating between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 20, wherein said one or more digital computer systems are connected electrically by a local area network.

30. A method for controlling the transfer of information between an information service provider and a user, comprising:

(A) receiving data from said information service, wherein said received data has a protocol identifier;

(B) determining the protocol of said received data; and

(C) delivering said data according to said protocol of said received data to a client computer.

31. A method for controlling the transfer of information between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 30, further comprising:

(D) receiving a return packet of data from said client computer.

32. A method for controlling the transfer of information between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 31, further comprising:

(E) delivering said returned packet of data from said client computer to said information service provider.

33. A computer program to manage communications between an information service provider and a user, comprising:

(A) a routine for receiving information from said information service;

(B) a routine for testing said received information to determine the source of said information;

(C) a routine for delivering said received information to a digital computer system.

34. A computer program to manage communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 33, further comprising: a routine for determining an age value for said received information.

35. A computer program to manage communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 33, further comprising: a routine for replacing old received information with newer received information.

36. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, comprising:

(A) a digital computer system connected to a local area network;

(B) a first interface device for communicating between said local area network and a satellite communication channel;

(C) a first connection between said satellite communication channel and a source of information;

(D) a second connection between said land line communication channel and a source of information; and

(E) a means for controlling the flow of information between said digital computer

system and said source of information.

37. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating between said local area network and a land line.

38. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating between said local area network and a wireless channel.

39. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating with said local area network to a satellite.

40. A system for managing the communications between an information service provider and a user, as recited in claim 36 further comprising a second interface device for communicating with said local area network to a routed channel.

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